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## Viewing cable 06AMMAN5567, TFLE01: JORDAN'S KING DISCUSSES REGIONAL

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">06AMMAN5567</a>	<a href="#">2006-07-25 09:04</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">CONFIDENTIAL</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Amman</a>

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SUBJECT: TFLE01: JORDAN'S KING DISCUSSES REGIONAL  
CHALLENGES WITH CODEL HOEKSTRA

11. (C) SUMMARY: King Abdullah reviewed for code1 Hoekstra his long-standing concerns about the strategic threat posed by Iran, and his efforts to build quietly a unity of purpose among Arab states, focusing on Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. The King also discussed the situation in Lebanon, offered advice on the Rome Lebanon Core group meeting, and said that Abu Mazen needed support as he was the only alternative to Hamas. END SUMMARY

#### COUNTERING IRAN

12. (C) Code1 Hoekstra met for an hour with King Abdullah II on July 24 at Queen Alia International Airport, just before the King's departure for Kuwait. Intelligence Committee Chairman Peter Hoekstra thanked the King for his support of a strong U.S.-Jordan relationship and his contributions toward stabilizing the region. Congressman Renzi praised the King for his courage and creativity, and for his help in the campaign against Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. He asked for more detail on the King's effort to build an alliance against Iran. The King described this effort as containing offensive and defensive elements. The defense included rebuffing Iranian efforts reach out to Arab Shia; the King wanted the conflict cast in Arab-Persian terms, not Sunni-Shia ones. As for the offensive component, the Arabs needed to develop stronger cards to use against Iran. The King did not believe Iran was as strong as it pretended to be. There were chinks in its armor. One idea was to use Iran's own tactic, and support minority elements inside Iran. He was considering a trip to Azerbaijan with this thought in mind. The King described the government of Qatar, fearing for its security, as having embraced Iran. Al-Jazeera television was moving the whole Arab street in favor of Iranian objectives. It was important to prevent Iran from exploiting Arab and international disunity of purpose.

13. (C) The King felt it was necessary to address the Iranian threat with one voice, and focus initially on Syria as the most vulnerable of Iran's assets. He described privileged Saudi/Egyptian relations with Syria as "gone" but said that Jordan had gone along with a Saudi/Egyptian desire to give the Asad regime one last chance to join the Arab mainstream and disavow obnoxious policies, including support for Iraqi insurgents, its behavior in Lebanon, and its facilitation of Iranian threats to the Arab world. Abdullah discounted the likelihood of Syrian action, but at least this effort would clarify matters for those who make excuses for Damascus. The King stressed the importance of focusing on Syria in the campaign to curtail Iranian influence. President Asad, he said, argued that the internal choice was "me or the Muslim Brothers." The King advocated concerted efforts to develop other options, perhaps by cultivating a coalition of Kurds, Druze, Sunni tribes, and the Sunni urban class. As for the challenge of Iran, it was important to "close the vulnerability" the present paralysis on the Palestinian/Israeli front presented for Iranian exploitation.

14. (C) Just as he believed Iran orchestrated accelerated action by Hizballah and Hamas, the King saw the surge in targeted sectarian violence in Baghdad as a part of a deliberate Iranian strategy to create chaos and challenge the U.S. and its allies. The clear intent was to compel the Sunnis to flee Baghdad and foment civil war. The King described events as having come to a crossroads. In a worst-case scenario, the King envisioned the disintegration of Iraq along sectarian/geographic lines, posing a dilemma for Jordan. Jordan could face the threat of massive refugee flows from Iraq, yet could not accommodate them as it was already bursting with displaced Iraqis and Lebanese. He could not foresee simply blocking them by force at the border, given the humanitarian crisis that step would create in the desert. Jordan's only real option would be to deploy armed units deep into al-Anbar, to stabilize the situation and prevent Syria and insurgents from filling the vacuum. He

said he was seeking immediate and senior-level consultation with the U.S. on this matter. Iraq also was a major field for Iranian advances, the King said. He viewed the Maliki government as "the government of the green zone." GID Chief Dhahabi described Maliki as sincere but overshadowed by pro-Iranian ministers who, for example, blocked his visit to Amman earlier this month. Dhahabi described the Iranians as helping Abdelaziz al-Hakim establish a southern federation with Basra as its capital, and helping Muqtada al-Sadr kill Sunnis in Baghdad and clear the city of them.

#### Discussions on Lebanon

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15. (C) King Abdullah expressed understanding for Israel's situation and its desire to "take down" Hizballah; however he felt to have a lasting solution the government and people of Lebanon needed to be on board. The destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure and harming of civilians were defeating that aim and pushing Lebanese into Hizballah's arms. They had also mobilized the "Arab street" behind Hizballah. That development put pressure on Arab moderate leaders. Despite that pressure, he and the Saudis remained determined to stand up to the Iranian threat. But they had to keep in mind emotional popular moods in their countries.

16. (C) Representative Harman thanked the King for his contributions to peace and stability, made at personal risk, and for his "magnificent" role in getting Arab moderate leaders to stand up. She said the Codel had been reassured by Prime Minister Olmert that Israel is not at war with the Lebanese government or people. The objective was to degrade Hizballah, and every attack was targeted against Hizballah. Our message to him, she said, was of the need to make that case more persuasively in public. Israeli leaders, she continued, are also focused on a NATO/Arab force with a mission to implement resolution 1559 and establish a monitoring group on the Lebanese-Syrian border. The King said he also was working in that direction, although deployment of Arab forces may be problematic. As with Iraq's neighbors, Arab deployments could raise suspicions about hidden agendas. However, he supported creation of a multinational force prepared to take on and fight Hizballah, and would support that idea in Rome. Jordan for months had proposed providing equipment and training for the LAF, and he hoped that initiative would be accelerated. He emphasized the importance of measures to keep any security assistance to the Lebanese from falling into Hizballah's hands. He also cautioned against unrealistic expectations for the LAF. Except for token elements and perhaps special forces, it would take at least six months to deploy the LAF effectively up to the blue line. An MNF was essential to fill the vacuum.

17. (C) Congressman Issa raised the Sheba Farms. In the medium-term, the King identified the opportunity posed by this crisis to establish the conditions needed to move toward an Israeli-Lebanese peace agreement and a complete break between Lebanon and Syria. An intelligent approach to defusing the Sheba Farms issue could be a key element in this process; addressing Lebanese sensitivities about Sheba could clear the path to Syrian isolation. Congressman Issa acknowledged the King's point about Arab participation in an MNF, but hoped he would leave open the possibility of Arab involvement in the monitoring group, in a non-combat role. The King again reiterated that Jordan and Egypt might be just too close geographically to avoid certain political sensitivities.

18. (C) As for the Rome Lebanon Core Group meeting, the King pledged to work closely with us and support that effort, but said it was important that process not appear to be simply U.S.-driven. Such an appearance would create suspicion that we were all working off an Israeli agenda. The Israelis needed to be flexible and the outcome needed to look like the agenda of the international community. If the Rome meeting did not take these concerns into account, moderate Arabs would have difficulty prevailing with their public.

¶9. (C) The King spoke of the need to support Abu Mazen as the only current alternative to Hamas. He said Israeli officials for the first time had expressed interest in deploying the Badr Brigade, a unit of Palestinians in Jordan under Jordanian control, for Abu Mazen's use. Foreign Minister Khatib described Abu Mazen's effort to form a national unity or emergency government. Chairman Hokestra said the codel had just met the PA President, but did not find his ideas realistic. GID Chief Dhahabi gave a gloomy assessment of Abu Mazen's ability to get the "factions" to commit to an acceptable government program and pointed to Khalid Mishaal's effectiveness in sabotaging any understanding reached between Abu Mazen and Haniya.

¶10. (SBU) Jordanian participants were Prince Feisal al-Hussein, the King's Office Director Bassem Awadallah, General Intelligence Director Dhahabi, Royal Advisor Farouk al-Qasrawi, Communications Advisor Amjad al-Adaileh, and a

notetaker. Ambassador (notetaker) and A/SIMO Chief joined Chairman Pete Hoekstra and Representatives Jane Harman, Darrel Issa, Rick Renzi, and staffers Jim Lewis, and Jeremy Bash.

¶11. (U) Codel Hoekstra did not clear this cable.

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